

MRS. NICHOLS DIED OF FRIGHT IN FIGHTING MASKED MEN; \$10,000 JEWELRY STOLEN; SERVANT CONFESSES PLOT

Admits He Let Men Into
House and Bind Him
as a Bluff.

FIVE UNDER ARREST IN POLICE DRAGNET

The death of Mrs. Elizabeth Griggs Nichols, widow of James E. Nichols, who founded Austin, Nichols & Co., was caused by fright and by the sudden strain of the courageous fight which the sixty-three-year-old woman made against three masked men who, aided by a servant, attacked her in her home at 4 East Seventy-ninth street on Wednesday night and took from her fingers after she was dead rings worth \$10,000.

This was made clear yesterday by the autopsy and by the confession of Onni Talas, the youthful second man in the Nichols home, that the three men had persuaded him to aid them in robbing Mrs. Nichols. Talas confessed yesterday morning to Deputy Police Commissioner Lord and Inspector Faurst after a rigorous all night examination. He was charged with homicide and made a prisoner. Eight others are detained as material witnesses.

Search was begun immediately for the three masked men. One of them, Talas told the police, is named Arthur Walters, or Waldeman, and was Mrs. Nichols's second man until a little less than three months ago. Then he was discharged after one of Mrs. Nichols's rings, mysteriously missing, had been mysteriously returned. It was on this man's recommendation, however, that Talas got the position of second man when Waldeman left.

In Talas's confession, taken by a stenographer before a notary, the young man, who is a Russian Finn, says that for several weeks he had been hard put to it to resist the urging of "Arthur" and the other two—who were Finns also—who he worked with to rob Mrs. Nichols of the large quantity of jewelry Arthur knew she possessed. He did not yield until Tuesday night, Talas said, when all four talked over the robbery.

No Thought of Murder.
Talas, who is only 23 years old, says he never thought for a moment that his confederates contemplated murdering Mrs. Nichols, or even that they would dare go to the length of violence to get the jewelry. He was terror stricken, he said, when the men dashed past him with their hands raised, crying to each other, "Hurry, let's get out of here, quick." The words and their pale faces told him what had happened.

A thorough search of the house by the police and by Matilda F. Griggs, Mrs. Nichols's nephew and attorney, hastily summoned last night from Ardley, N. Y., showed that probably all the three men got from the crime was four rings worth \$10,000 which they snatched from her fingers before fleeing.

The autopsy, performed yesterday afternoon by Coroner's Physician Benjamin Schwartz and Dr. Otto F. Schultz of the District Attorney's office, showed that Mrs. Nichols was killed by the shock of the attack upon her and not strangled to death. At her age, 63, she had a weak heart and a tendency to nervousness, which had rendered her powers of resistance to any sudden nervous or physical strain exceedingly low. Apparently she died at the moment the three men set upon her.

Every effort is being made by the police to find these men and with good hopes of success. Talas has given a full description of them, especially of Arthur, and has told them of several places, poolrooms, resorts in Harlem and near Central Park where they spend much time.

"We know where this man Arthur lives," said Inspector Faurst. "We know his hangouts and his associates. If we can't do quick work now I'm guessing wrong, that's all."

Five Under Arrest.
Already the police have arrested five men, brought in by several squads of detectives dispatched in automobiles to places Talas named. These five men, who are three Finns and two Russians, are detained at the Third branch detective bureau, though no charge has been made against them. They will be taken later to the House of Detention, it was said, where they may be held as material witnesses.

Inspector Faurst and Second Deputy Commissioner Lord questioned the three suspects for a long time and were finally convinced that they were innocent of complicity in the robbery and murder. Ernest Vital, the butler, had long been suspected of the crime, but he has been cleared forward an account of his actions on Wednesday night—his night off—that he was soon relieved of suspicion.

At first the detectives wondered whether Helena Troitsen, the cook, who is also a Finn, would have difficulty in accounting for the fact that she left the house at 8 o'clock Wednesday night, a few moments before Talas admitted the three men. She convinced them, however, that she had no knowledge of the plot and in fact helped the police materially. The maid, with Edith Langfeldt, satisfied them that she really was tied to a chair by them.

That part of Talas's confession which described his admittance of his three confederates and what followed was substantially as follows:

"When the bell rang I let them in and they tied my hands behind me, as I was seated. They did not tie my feet or gag me. They went up stairs and were gone about fifteen minutes. When they came down they were all excited and kept saying, 'Hurry up, let's get out.' They didn't pay any attention to me or even tell me how much they got and I thought something was wrong. I was afraid to go up stairs when Edith Langfeldt untied my hands after she had got out of the chair they tied her hands to."

Cook Aids the Police.
Helena Tolonen, the cook, told the police a story that aid greatly in ending the three men went about their plan to enter the house, and shows how carefully they must have planned it.

"I left the house at 8 o'clock or a little later," she said. "I saw Arthur and two other men. They came up to me, and Arthur said: 'Have you got a date?' I said I was going to the movies, but he said: 'Let's go to the park.'"

"I said, 'No,' and went on to the picture show. One of the men followed me, and Arthur and the other went into the park. The other man left me at the theatre."

Arthur must have worn a mask, according to the story of Edith Langfeldt, the maid. She did not recognize him as one of the three who came to her room, argued her and tied her to a chair after they had gone through the motions of tying up Talas.

"They pointed a revolver at me," she



Picture No. 1, Mrs. Elizabeth Nichols; 2, the home of Mrs. Nichols at 4 East Seventy-ninth street, the cross indicating the library in which she was robbed and found dead; 3, Onni Talas, the second man, who confessed his part in the crime, being taken under arrest from the Nichols home; 4, Helena Pivonen, the cook, and 5, Edith Langfeldt, the maid, both of whom are held as material witnesses.

Nichols bought them, has been called back from Massachusetts and is expected today to furnish one. The list, the police telephoned all over the city, and sent men to every pawnshop to watch for, is as follows:

An emerald ring, two carats, with a two carat diamond on each side. Four carats, each set with three diamonds of two carats each. A plain gold wedding ring with the initials "E. J. N." to "E. G." or "L. G." A small open face gold watch inlaid with diamonds is also believed to be missing.

Mr. Griggs and the servants agreed that Mrs. Nichols had a great many things for a long time. I don't believe anything will happen. "I wouldn't go riding with the doctor. I know too much about Mrs. Mohr, for one time, when I was down at Newport I went out to find the doctor and he was sitting in a hammock. I sat down beside him while we were talking and in a few minutes Mrs. Mohr came out in a rage and accused me of kissing him. He left in a hurry and I did too."

Doctor's Secretary Also As-
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EVIDENCE IS PILING UP

PROVIDENCE, Sept. 9.—Miss Florence Ormsby, secretary to Dr. C. Franklin Mohr, who was murdered on the Barrington road on August 31, said today that Mrs. Mohr had told her that she had a right to kill her husband and that the law would uphold her. Mrs. Mohr had just been told that Miss Emily Burger had been reengaged as housekeeper at the doctor's Newport home.

Miss Ormsby also said that Victor Brown, the negro charged with killing Dr. Mohr, had called at the doctor's office the day before the shooting and after demanding to know why he had been discharged had nearly come to blows with the doctor and had threatened him. "I was sitting at the desk in the office when Brown came in," said Miss Ormsby. "I didn't like him, feared him, and when he began to talk loudly to Dr. Mohr I winked at the doctor to warn him to avoid a fight. Dr. Mohr told him that McAndrews, the superintendent, was the one to ask about the reasons for his discharge, and as Brown went out he turned, and waving his fist, shouted: 'You won't be so well off soon.'"

Dr. Mohr had been so worried by the many threats made against his life that on one time he planned to have his wife arrested, said Miss Ormsby, and was kept from doing it by the difficulty of making a charge against her that would not cause notoriety.

"He did not know just how to go about it," she said. "But he finally told me to tell Mrs. Mohr that 'another letter from that woman was in his desk.' If she went to get it and broke the lock the doctor was going to try and have her arrested for it, but he gave up the idea after a while."

"I told the doctor and Miss Burger on the Saturday before the shooting that Mrs. Mohr had warned me not to go out with him on Tuesday when he went to Newport. Miss Burger did not pay any attention to it, and the doctor said, 'Oh, well, she has been saying these

things for a long time. I don't believe anything will happen.'"

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